

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

In addition, this particular violation of law will likely further divide the nation. And there is good reason to believe that this will require lawsuits following the election. It will call into question the validity of the re-election of President Bush if that is the result in November. The nation cannot afford to have a people who do not accept the results of the election because they believe that Sinclair Corporation has blatantly violated the law to "tip" the election.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.